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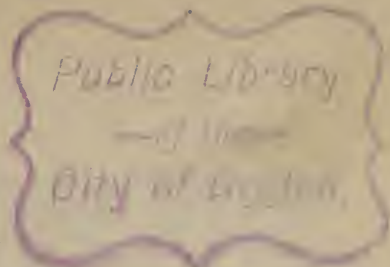


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LETTER FROM GENERAL CROOK

ON

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GIVING THE BALLOT TO INDIANS.

THE following letter from General George Crook, U. S. A., to the corresponding secretary of the *Indian Rights Association*, is worthy of the most careful attention.

General Crook's great acquaintance with the disposition and condition of the Indian, his long experience with the different tribes, and his marked success in his treatment of the race, give his opinion a peculiar weight and entitle it to the greatest respect. A soldier whose views are the result of years of personal contact with the Indian, is certainly not liable to be considered either foolishly sentimental or unpractical.

From the ALTA CALIFORNIA, December 24th, 1884.

The committee of the House of Representatives, to whom the subject was referred, very properly reported that if there were no other reason for not conferring the ballot upon the Indian, it would be sufficient to know that it would make necessary the repeal of the law against selling him whisky. The committee rightly thought that to give Lo the ballot would do him less good than to keep the bottle away from him. There are also some white men who are in the same boat.

HEAD QUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA,
WHIPPLE BARRACKS, PRESCOTT, January 3d, 1885.

My Dear Mr. Welsh:

The most welcome letter I could ask for has been the one in which you notify me of the aid extended to Michael Burns (an Apache boy). I am glad for your own sake as well as for the boy's, since I am certain you shall have no cause to regret this benevolence, but may have every reason to be proud of your beneficiary. Permit me to invite your close at-

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tention to the appended extract from the columns of the *Alta California* of the 24th ultimo, which, if giving an exact representation of the case, would lead me to believe that the opponents of the Indian Franchise Bill have had recourse to very threadbare arguments. The law prohibiting the sale of liquor to Indians is practically a dead letter. Indians, who so desire, can to-day obtain from unprincipled whites and others, all the vile whisky for which they can pay cash, which is no more and no less than the Indian, as a citizen, could purchase. The proposition I make on behalf of the Indian is that he is at this moment capable, with very little instruction, of exercising every manly right; he doesn't need have so much *guardianship* as many people would have us believe; what he does need is protection under the law; the privilege of suing in the courts, which privilege must be founded upon the franchise to be of the slightest value. If, with the new prerogatives, individual Indians continue to use alcoholic stimulants, we must expect to see them rise or fall socially as do white men under similar circumstances. For my own part, I question very much whether we should not find the Indians who would then be drunkards, to be the very same ones who under present surroundings experience no difficulty whatever in gratifying this cursed appetite. The great majority of the Indians are wise enough to recognize the fact that liquor is the worst foe to their advancement. Complaints have frequently been made by them to me that well-known parties have maintained this illicit traffic with members of their tribe, but no check could be imposed, or punishment secured, for the very good reason that Indian testimony carries no weight whatever with a white jury. Now by arming the red man with the franchise, we remove this impediment and provide a cure for the very evil which seems to excite so much apprehension; besides this, we would open a greater field of industrial development. The majority of the Indians whom I have met, are perfectly willing to work for their white neighbors to whom they can make themselves serviceable in many offices, such as teaming, herding, chopping wood, cutting hay, and harvesting; and for such labor there is at nearly all times a corresponding demand at reasonable wages. Unfortunately, there are many unscrupulous characters to be found near all reservations who don't hesitate, after employing Indians, to defraud them of the full amount agreed upon. Several such instances have been brought to my notice during the present year, but there was no help for the Indian who could not bring suit in the courts.

Every such swindle is a discouragement both to the Indian most directly concerned, and to a large circle of interested friends who naturally prefer the relations of idleness to work which brings no remuneration.

Our object should be to get as much voluntary labor from the Indian as possible. Every dollar honestly gained by hard work is so much subtracted from the hostile element and added to that which is laboring for peace and civilization.

In conclusion, I wish to say most emphatically that the American Indian is the intellectual peer of most, if not all, the various nationalities we

have assimilated to our laws, customs, and language. He is fully able to protect himself, if the ballot be given and the courts of law not closed against him.

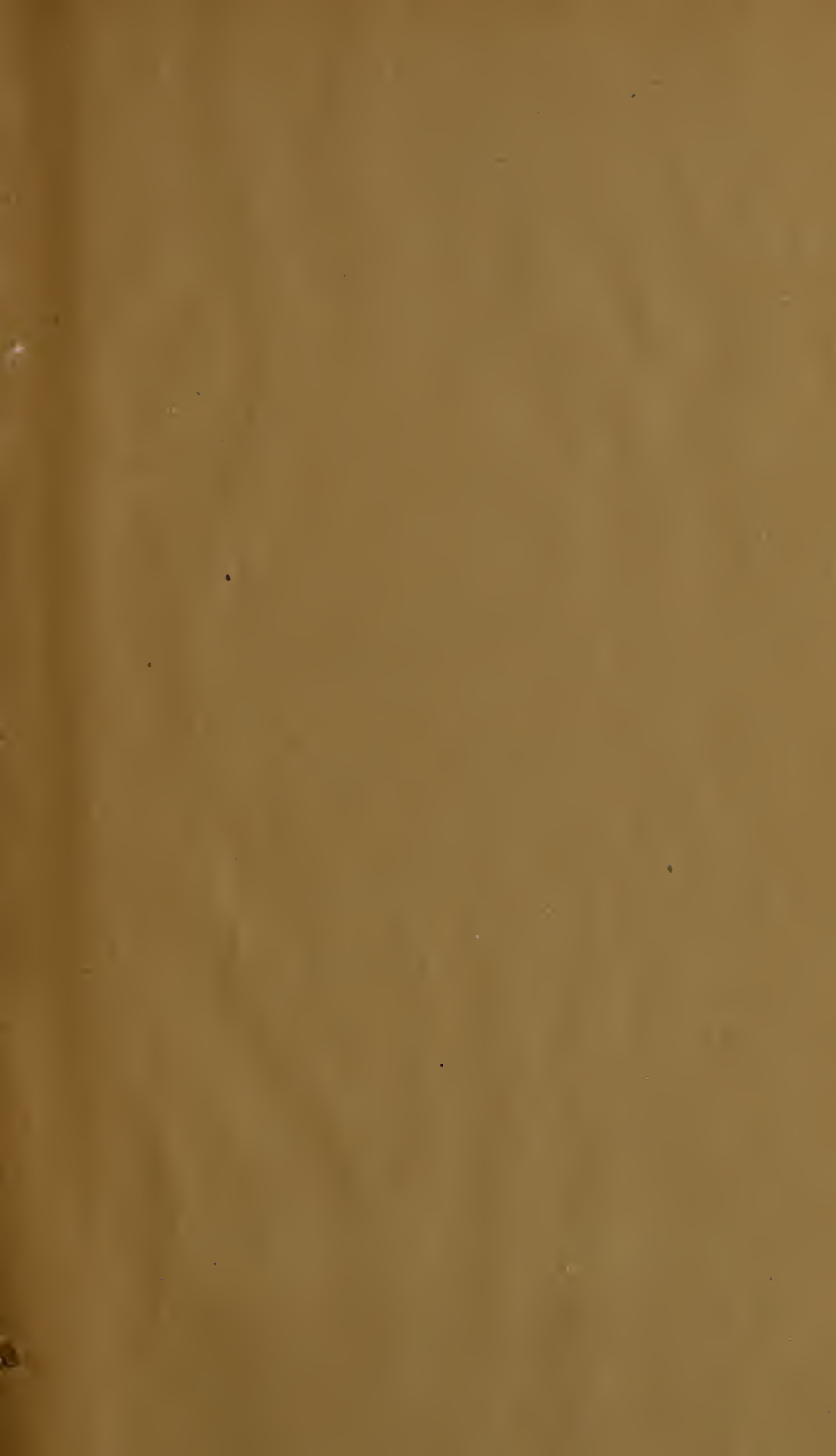
If our aim be to remove the aborigine from a state of servile dependence, we cannot begin in a better or more practical way than by making him think well of himself, to force upon him the knowledge that he is a part and parcel of the nation, clothed with all its political privileges, entitled to share in all its benefits. Our present treatment degrades him in his own eyes, by making evident the difference between his own condition and that of those about him. To sum up my panacea for the Indian trouble is to make the Indian self-supporting, a condition which can never, in my opinion, be attained so long as the privileges which have made labor honorable, respectable, and able to defend itself, be withheld from him.

Very truly yours,

GEORGE CROOK,
Brigadier-General U. S. Army.





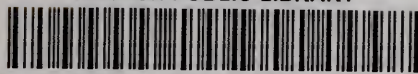








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